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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI, NEA/PPD, NEA/P, AND INR/R/MR

LONDON FOR TSOU
PARIS FOR ZEYA
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FOREIGN PRESS CENTER FOR SILAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KPAQ KMDR OIIP MU

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: SECTARIAN DANGERS IN LEBANON, LATEST ABU GHRAIB PHOTOS, BENEFITS OF THE DOHA FORUM

Sectarian Dangers in Lebanon

¶1. Government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" published an editorial on February 17 under the title "Lebanon: Caution Is the Lesson from Past Conflict":

"Political conflict and the resort to media statements by various powers is not in the best interest of the Lebanese, and on the contrary leads to more disturbances. The Hariri assassination is worthy of continuing investigation to find the perpetrators. But subjecting this issue to political wrangling provokes negative feelings and escalates conflicts. Retaining the Lebanese national interest atop other priorities is important because political sectarianism will not benefit any party in Lebanon."

Latest Abu Ghraib Photos

¶2. "Oman" also carried an editorial on February 18 entitled "Iraq and the Continuing Dilemma":

"Abu Ghraib violence has again cast a negative light on the American presence in Iraq. It is more vital than ever that America defines a timeframe for withdrawal, in cooperation with Iraq's government and the United Nations. Iraq was destroyed using the excuse of getting rid of Saddam's regime, but it seems things are worse now with continuing violations against Iraqi prisoners, combined with the uncontrollable security situation. Iraqis are anxious because death is pursuing them, likely to strike at any time. It is vital that the Al Jafari government strive for stability, peace and unity for the benefit of all Iraqis."

Benefits of the Doha Forum

¶3. Privately owned Arabic daily "Al-Watan" published an editorial on February 18, entitled "The Doha Forum and the Need for a Shared Culture":

"The American and Islamic world forum in Doha is true proof of the GCC's readiness to dialogue, and to encourage others to participate. Also, the participation of respected figures such as Oman's Foreign Affairs Minister is positive. He is known for his moderate opinion, and for representing the thinking of the ordinary Arab man on the street regardless of diplomatic or official position. The dialogue in these forums deals with various aspects of citizens' life; the economy, security and governance. Such forums open windows of dialogue, exposing people around the world to different opinions."

BALTIMORE